



Accessing the Scholarship: Frequently Asked Questions 2015 - 2016

Contents

Scholarship Requirements 3

Filing for Financial Aid 4

Paying for College 6

Financial Aid Award Letters 8

College Admissions and Enrollment 9

SCHOLARSHIP REQUIREMENTS

1. What are the College Bound Scholarship requirements?

As part of the College Bound sign-up process, students pledge to:

- Graduate from a Washington State high school or home school program with a cumulative 2.0 GPA or higher.
- Have no felony convictions.
- Apply for financial aid by completing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) or WASFA (Washington Application for State Financial Aid).

In order to receive the scholarship, students must fulfill the pledge and:

- Be income-eligible, as determined by their college with the information from their FAFSA or WASFA.
- Be accepted to an eligible college and begin attending within one year of high school graduation.
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen, or have DACA status.

2. Do I have to graduate with my high school class to receive College Bound?

No. You may graduate earlier or later than your original high school class, but you must graduate—a GED does not qualify.

3. I am a Running Start student and will receive my high school diploma from the college where I am taking classes. Do I meet the requirement?

Yes. However, you will need to provide WSAC with a transcript to confirm that you have met the graduation requirement.

4. I attend an alternative high school and we do not receive grades. How will I know I have met the 2.0 GPA requirement?

Ask your principal or registrar to send a letter to WSAC stating that you met the 2.0 GPA requirement.

5. I am a home-schooled student. What do I have to do?

In order to assess your academic readiness for college and ensure that you meet the GPA requirement (RCW 28B.118.010), you must provide your results from at least one standardized test to the Washington Student Achievement Council. Acceptable tests include PSAT, SAT, Plan/ASPIRE, ACT, and Smarter Balanced Assessment Tests.

6. Do I have to enroll in college right after I graduate from high school to receive the scholarship?

No. However, you must enroll and earn college credit(s) no later than the fall term (as defined by the college) one academic year following high school graduation. For example, if you graduate by August 2016, you have until fall 2017 to enroll and earn college credit. Be sure you meet all the college's deadlines for class registration and financial aid to complete enrollment.

FILING FOR FINANCIAL AID

7. Which financial aid application should I file?

File the FAFSA if you are a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen as defined by the U.S. Department of Education. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the most common category of eligible non-citizen is that of permanent resident (someone with a "green card"), but there are other categories as well. For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Education's website at <http://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/eligibility/non-us-citizens>.

File the WASFA if you are ineligible for federal financial aid due to immigration status. Find more information at www.readysetgrad.org/WASFA.

Recent changes in Washington State now allow students with DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) status to receive the scholarship. Students must meet all other College Bound criteria, including residency requirements (the student's parents must live in Washington for at least one year).

If you do not meet the College Bound Scholarship requirements or do not have DACA status, you may still be eligible for Washington's State Need Grant or other scholarships. Visit www.readysetgrad.org/wasfa for more information.

8. When do I need to file the FAFSA or WASFA?

The priority deadline for College Bound students is February 1. If you plan to attend college in the 2016-17 academic year, you should complete the FAFSA or WASFA between January 1 and February 1, 2016. This will ensure that you will receive the maximum award you are eligible for.

Your college may require you to complete additional financial aid forms. To see a list of Washington colleges' financial aid deadlines, visit the Washington Financial Aid Association's website at <http://wfaa.org/docs/students/FinancialAidDeadlines.pdf>

9. If I didn't file the FAFSA or WASFA by February 1, will I still receive the scholarship?

Yes, but file the application as soon as possible. You will still be eligible for the College Bound Scholarship if you meet all the requirements. However, other aid sources are limited, which is why you should file by the February 1 priority filing date.

10. Do my parents have to file their taxes before I apply for financial aid?

No. You may use last year's taxes or estimated tax amounts on your financial aid form. Once your parents have completed their taxes, you will need to login to the application site and update the income portion.

11. Should I file the FAFSA or WASFA if I'm not sure I'm going to go to college or I'm not sure where?

Yes, both the financial aid applications are free and take less than an hour to complete. If there's any chance you may attend college in the 2016-17 academic year, file the form.

Never pay to complete the FAFSA or WASFA. There are many resources available to help you. Ask your school counselor or visit www.readysetgrad.org/cgw-info for a list of free, statewide financial aid filing events.

12. Do I have to file a FAFSA or WASFA every year I am in college?

Yes.

13. How will the colleges know I am a College Bound student? Do I have to tell them?

No. Colleges will access WSAC's secure portal to determine if you are College Bound. This will happen automatically. Be sure to list every college you are considering on the financial aid application.

14. Is the FAFSA or WASFA the only financial aid form I have to complete?

No. Completing your financial aid application is only the first step of the financial aid process. Your college will likely have other financial aid forms for you to complete. Check the with the financial aid office at the college you wish to attend.

15. How do I get my allowance for books?

It will be included in your College Bound financial aid award.

16. What happens after I file my FAFSA or WASFA?

WSAC will match your original College Bound application with your FAFSA or WASFA and notify you by email (the one listed on your financial aid application) if the match was successful. Your parent/guardian will also receive a copy of this email.

If you do not receive an email within two weeks of submitting your FAFSA or WASFA, call us at 888-535-0747, option 1.

17. If I make a mistake on my financial aid application or need to update my information, how do I do that?

If you wrote an incorrect email or mailing address, forgot to sign your application, or need to update your income, you may login using your FSA ID to make those changes. If you filed the FAFSA and incorrectly reported your SSN, you must contact the Financial Aid office at the college.

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

18. How do I know if my family meets the College Bound Scholarship income requirement?

Your family's income must be less than 65 percent of the median family income (MFI). For example, in 2015-16 the MFI for a family of four was \$54,500. To see the complete MFI chart with amounts for different family sizes, go to www.readysetgrad.org/cbs-mfi. Keep in mind that this number changes annually.

19. What does the scholarship pay for?

College Bound will combine with other state financial aid to cover tuition (at comparable public colleges), some fees, and a small book allowance. College Bound is not a 'full-ride' scholarship. The maximum award is based on tuition and service and activity fees for 15 credits at a public institution, plus the book allowance.

The other college costs such as room and board, transportation, personal expenses, etc. will be the student and family's responsibility and could be covered by a combination of the family's funds and federal grants, loans, scholarships and work-study.

20. How much will I get from College Bound?

The amount of your scholarship depends on many factors such as your family's income, Expected Family Contribution (EFC), and the costs associated with the college you attend. For example, it will be less expensive if you live at home and attend a community college than if you live on campus and attend a four-year university. The choices you make will affect your financial aid award.

21. Can I attend a private college even though the tuition is more?

Yes. Typically, the College Bound Scholarship covers tuition at comparable colleges which for private four-year colleges would be either the University of Washington (UW) or Washington State University (WSU).

This year (2015-16), however, because the tuition for UW and WSU in 2015-2016 was lowered (\$11,611 and \$11,345 respectively) the maximum award in 2015-16 for a private four-year university is \$11,904. Tuition for 2016-17 will be set in the spring of 2016.

22. What must I do to continue receiving my College Bound Scholarship once I'm in college?

You must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as determined by your college – this varies among schools but is typically a 2.0 GPA. You must also file a new financial aid application each year to ensure that you meet the income requirement.

23. How many years can I receive my scholarship?

College Bound is a four-year scholarship (8 semesters, 12 quarters) that must be used within five years of high school graduation. For example, if you graduated in June 2016, you have until June 2021 to earn your certificate or degree. It is to your advantage to complete your bachelor's degree within four years. A bachelor's degree is the highest degree you can earn using the scholarship.

24. Can I use College Bound for:

- *Running Start classes?*
 - No. You must meet high school graduation requirements before you can receive College Bound.
- *Summer classes?*
 - Yes. However, you will use one quarter or semester of eligibility so be sure to take a full load to ensure that you will receive College Bound until you graduate.
- *Online classes?*
 - Yes but they must be at one of the eligible institutions.
- *Study abroad?*
 - Yes, but again, the program must be with one of the eligible institutions.

25. How does federal aid (the Pell, SEOG, etc.) affect my financial aid award?

Think of your financial aid as a complete package – it does not matter which grant pays which expense. Grant aid will combine to cover campus charges and anything remaining will pay for other expenses, such as housing or transportation. The college financial aid office will determine which funds pay tuition.

26. I may need to take a quarter or semester off school. Will I lose my scholarship?

As long as you are still income eligible, you can “re-start” the College Bound Scholarship. Remember two important things: a) The College Bound Scholarship is a four-year scholarship that must be used within five years of high school graduation; and, b) If you don’t take a full load, you are still using one of your quarters or semesters of eligibility.

27. What are college fees? Does College Bound pay for them?

There are various fees charged by the college. College Bound covers only service and activity fees, which are determined by each college. Check the college website for examples of service and activity fees.

28. My family made too much money this year to receive the scholarship, but my father may lose his job next year – could I receive College Bound then?

Yes. Eligibility can be re-evaluated or restarted if you have a valid College Bound application, file the FAFSA or WASFA, and you met the other requirements.

29. We were selected for “income verification” by the college, what does that mean and why were we selected?

This process is a way for your college to confirm the data you reported are accurate, such as tax returns, on your FAFSA or WASFA. It is a random process and it is important that you contact the financial aid office immediately. Don’t delay – doing so could affect your financial aid award and whether or not you can attend college.

FINANCIAL AID AWARD LETTERS

30. Will I receive my Award Letter(s) (offer of financial aid) in the mail or by email?

It depends on the school. Check the website to see if you will be sent an Award Letter or if you have to login and retrieve it from the college's business office.

31. I received notification that I filed my FAFSA or WASFA and that it matched with my College Bound application, but I still haven't received my financial aid award letter, why not?

POSSIBLE REASON	ACTION
Your FAFSA or WASFA is incomplete.	Check your email for messages from the Department of Education if you filed the FAFSA or the Need Access website for WASFA.
You did not include the college name on your FAFSA or WASFA.	Check the list of schools on your financial aid application. Make updates if necessary.
You have been chosen for the Verification Process.	Contact the college's financial aid office and supply the requested information immediately.
Your high school graduation requirements have not been verified.	Contact the Council to find out if a copy of your final transcript is required. 1-888-535-0747, option 1.
Your family does not meet the income requirements.	Review the income requirements at http://www.readysetgrad.org/cbs-mfi
You missed the enrollment or financial aid deadline at the college.	Check the college's website to make sure you met the deadline.
The college has not prepared Award Letters yet.	Check the college's site for when Award Letters will be sent.

32. I don't understand my Award Letter. Where can I get help?

Check out your college's financial aid web page for an explanation of the Award Letter and an explanation of your options. Many colleges now use the "Shopping Sheet," a standardized financial aid Award Letter. To see an example of a standardized shopping sheet, go to studentaid.ed.gov/sites/default/files/comparing-colleges.pdf

As you make your decision about which college you will attend, comparing Award Letters is recommended. You can use an online calculator at <http://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/next-steps/comparing-aid-offers>.

33. I don't see the College Bound Scholarship on my Award Letter or it's not as much as I expected?

These are a few of the possible reasons; check with your college's financial aid office if you have questions.

- Your family's income does not meet the standard of 65 percent of MFI (\$54,500 for a family of four in 2015-16).
- Your financial aid award is greater than your 'need.'
- You did not enroll full-time.
- Other state financial aid was offered.
- Your college has included your College Bound award with your State Need Grant award.

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

34. Where can I use my College Bound Scholarship? Is there a list of eligible colleges?

There are 67 eligible institutions in Washington. They include public community or technical colleges, public four-year institutions, approved, independent colleges or universities, and private career colleges where you may use your College Bound Scholarship. Find the list at www.readysetgrad.org/eligible-institutions.

35. Can I attend college part-time?

Yes. However, your College Bound funds will be reduced. For example, 9 to 11 quarter credits is considered 3/4 time and College Bound will be reduced to a 75 percent award. Enrolling in 6 to 8 quarter credits will result in a 50 percent pro-rated award. 3 to 5 quarter credit enrollment will result in a 25 percent award.

36. What type of degree or certificate can I earn?

You may earn any approved degree or certificate offered by one of the eligible schools listed above. Funds may not be used for a Theology program at any school. The highest degree you can earn using the scholarship is a bachelor's degree.

37. When should I apply to college?

Every college has different application deadlines. For some large universities, you may begin applying up to one year prior to your high school graduation. For community college or technical college, you may need to apply several months before classes begin. For exact dates, check with the colleges you are considering.

38. What is a college application fee?

Some, but not all colleges, require an application fee when you apply. There are application fee waivers available. If you qualified for an SAT or ACT test waiver, you should also be able to receive the application fee waiver. Ask the Admissions office about waivers or search the college website.

39. Are there other forms and deadlines?

Yes. You will have to complete forms for the college's Financial Aid office, Residential Life (housing and meal plan), etc. Respond to all requests immediately – delaying could affect your financial aid award, your housing assignment, or class schedule. So keep a calendar and check your mail or email often.